

Eco-Community Dialogues Newsletter

Nancy Nelson, Editor

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The Most Precious Thing on Earth

It could be highly valuable to read and discuss the book, *DIRT: THE EROSION OF CIVILIZATIONS*, authored by geomorphologist *David R. Montgomery* of THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON. The author contends that depletion of top soil is what collapses civilizations. What the world needs most is a few inches of high-quality top soil, because Mother Earth's "skin" is gone. The good topsoil was stripped away by modern agriculture. Topsoil is precious and it takes years to restore depleted dirt.

To begin building up topsoil, you may work in coffee grounds, fallen leaves, and wood chips. You may protect your top soil from climate extremes by covering it with organic mulch. You may apply compost. You may add "Soil Soup" from worm castings. Soil restoration has a desirable outcome. You will be flabbergasted at how much food you can grow in your yard.

MONSANTO's Soil Footprint

But going organic is a sharp learning curve for the global plantation. For example, MONSANTO's Executive Vice President of GLOBAL STRATEGY, *Kerry Preete*, asserts that MONSANTO REQUIRES THEIR SEED GROWERS TO INTENSIFY THEIR EXISTING SOIL FOOTPRINT. Their corporate vision is to force another ten additional bushels of GMO corn per acre. The future collapse of the oligarchy may be traced back to the world today's dysfunctional food system of intense industrial soil depletion.

The biggest contributor for MONSANTO COMPANY's \$2.2 billion net sales this fourth quarter was their MONSANTO seeds and genomic business. If DUPONT is envious of MONSANTO's lust for \$15 billion in annual revenue, corporate executives may stop feeling jealous because MORE GROWTH MEANS ECONOMIC COLLAPSE IS INEVITABLE. *The bigger they are, the harder they fall.*

In 2012, MONSANTO bought a software tools company, PRECISION PLANTING, INC. in *Fremont, ILLINOIS*, to get national data base statistical soil analysis of soil conditions, for "Precision Farming" of seed depth and spacing.

In 2013, MONSANTO is spending \$930 million to buy CLIMATE CORPORATION, to get weather data bases for statistical analysis, to push MORE Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) seeds in coming decades, despite water shortages and climate change.

In 2014 MONSANTO is launching a product called "Field Scripts" in four states. The program puts iPods into tractor cabs. Farmers will HAVE TO share with MONSANTO COMPANY the data about their individual farms. They will be enablers so MONSANTO COMPANY can vary the amount of seed. Tablet computers with GPS guidance systems on tractors will then be able to use local conditions for automatically sowing and fertilizing WITHOUT NEEDING TO BE STEERED BY A TRACTOR OPERATOR.

I wouldn't tell you this is the dawning of robotic drone farming because you consciously recognize it. Maybe you haven't had your local farmers eliminated yet.

(Source: April 2013, SUNSET MAGAZINE, "Scientist David R. Montgomery" by Jim McCausland; October 3, 2013, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "Monsanto to Buy Climate Corporation in Data-Science Push" by David Kedmodel, with Michel Hickins and Ben Fox Rubin contributors)

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What it Costs You

Dr. and Mrs. Ray Seidler have retired in Ashland, OREGON, and he is volunteering to speak to groups all around JACKSON COUNTY, regarding the biosafety hazards of *Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)* crops. Last month he received invitations as a guest speaker for both the Jefferson Center and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. This month he did a presentation for the Ashland Garden Club. This month he is also doing a special presentation for the Southern Oregon Climate Change on Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at 6 p.m. in the Adams Room of the Medford Library. A person could attend these opportunities to learn.

To invite Dr. Seidler to guest speak to your groups, contact rayseidler@msn.com, or call 541.601.9955. He formerly wrote the federal ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) "*Biosafety Plan*" and is a Retired EPA Senior Research Microbiologist, and Retired Professor of Microbiology (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY). The *International Biographical Centre* of Cambridge, ENGLAND, lists him as one of the 2,000 outstanding World Scientists of the 20th century, and he is listed in *Who's Who in Science and Engineering*, and in *Who's Who in the World*. Everyone eats so the GMO safety issue of global prime concern is non-partisan. One may consider it a basic human rights concern in light of some of the pertinent facts coming to light. If left and right unite to pass Measure 15-119 banning GMO crops in JACKSON COUNTY, then everyone will have what you want, FOOD BIOSAFETY.

- *Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)* crops were started in 1996.
- GMO's currently cover 450 million acres of land mass equal to seven states the size of OREGON.
- There are four million pollen grains per GMO corn plant
- There are 120 billion GMO pollen grains per acre
- The pollen scatter range is up to 14-miles by air drift.
- Between 2000 and 2012 food prices rose 287% and beverage prices rose 127%.
- THE TECHNOLOGY FEES COST CONSUMERS A 45% INCREASE IN "EVERYTHING", NOT JUST AN INCREASE IN FOOD AND DRINK PRICES.

Rich AND Increased with Goods

"The Buddha taught about the importance of compassion, but even though monks study these teachings, often they are not serious about what they are doing. They stop at an intellectual level and do not really practice what they have learned. I feel that our modern educational system fails to provide sufficient education about compassion. The time has come to transform this whole system.

Society is formed through its educational system, but the educational system does not transmit the deeper human values of compassion and kindness. Then all of society lives with this false view that leads to a superficial life, in which we *live like machines* that don't need affection. We become part of that. *We become like machines.* That is because today's society is based on money. A society that is based on money is aggressive, and those with power can bully and behave cruelly to others. This situation produces growing social unrest. *A society that depends on money has problems that reflect its beliefs.*

In a society in which money is the priority, people in positions of leadership, like politicians, have emerged from within a society that depends on money, so naturally they think like that, and lead society further in that direction. In this kind of society, people who value affection and compassion are treated like fools, while those whose priority is making money become MORE and MORE ARROGANT."

---His Holiness, The Dali Lama

(Source: October/November/December 2013, EVOLVE! "*Becoming Kuan Yin*" by Steven Levine; BECOMING KUAN YIN THE EVOLUTION OF COMPASSION, Publisher Red Wheel/Weiser ISBN9781578635559)

The Circle of Compassion

*"Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living beings, we will not ourselves find peace."
—by Albert Schweitzer*

Marla Spivak's talk "Why Bees are Disappearing" posted in June 2013, on www.ted.com. She boils the problem down to **a flowerless landscape** and **a dysfunctional food system**. The nation of the bees had survived for 50 million years, until the agrochemical practices warred against insect society. Bees started dying off seven years ago.

Maybe you haven't yet, or maybe you have, become curious. Sooner or later you'll want to have an attitude of curiosity over the honeybee society's feedback in holding up a mirror to Man, requesting LARGE SCALE CHANGE. Unless the beehives were lost, a person may not know if warring against Nature has cause and effect consequences.

Every winter about one-third of all beehives vanish. The corollary is that one-third of all crops need the bees. Are the vanishing bees warning Man that one third of all crops on earth may vanish if Man continues his war against insect society and plants. Consider this, Man increased by 300 percent his crops that need bee pollination, and now at least six biocides are found in flower pollen. Bees get hungry and have to eat impurities in their food source. So do we, *the bees are telling us*.

The use of hazardous chemicals is the antithesis of being in harmony with the laws of Nature. You could sleep on it tonight. You might wake up noticing the role that sentient beings play in the ecosystem. You might not have noticed that *Garter Snakes* are docile, non-venomous ministers who serve as natural pest and weed control on the west side of the CASCADES. Your peaceful friend will slither out of hideout to gobble up bothersome bugs and slugs. (Note: You do have to beware of the venomous in society, such as *Black Widow* spiders, *Scorpions*, and *Rattlesnakes*. Clear away all debris, such as rocks and plywood, to discourage their habitat, and be especially cautious on the east side of the CASCADES)

In fact there is a hidden world that is in and around crops. Children of the world call it the fairy kingdom, but it is an *insect society* that is deeply intertwined with the plant kingdom. According to the extension Professor at the UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, insects and *arachnids* ("spiders") are some of Man's best allies. The 99% of insects and spiders are good "Love Bugs". They DO NO HARM by preying upon the one percent of insect society that is destructive to our crops. And they DO NO HARM by being bird snacks.

For example, when a plant is fed upon by aphids, mites, or squash bugs, the stalked plant emits a chemical alarm signal that alerts nearby beneficial bugs and good spiders on pest patrol to come to the victim's rescue. MORE THAN 3,000 SPECIES OF NORTH AMERICAN SPIDERS DINE UPON GARDEN PESTS. That's a lot of emergency responders!

THERE ARE 450 NATIVE SPECIES OF LADYBUGS IN NORTH AMERICA. They are officers of the peaceable kingdom also! Entomologists prefer to call them beetles as they are not true bugs, they are *Coccinellids*. An adult *ladybug beetle* eats 50 aphids every day and lays hundreds of egg. When the babies hatch they are VERY hungry. Baby ladybugs eat thousands of aphids, mealy bugs, spider mites, thrips, and whiteflies.

Your book club may want to read and discuss **TUNING IN TO NATURE, by Philip S. Callahan**. The author reveals the intelligent communication systems present in Nature. INSECTS AND PLANTS TALK TO ONE ANOTHER THROUGH **EMISSIONS IN THE INFRARED FREQUENCY RANGE**. THAT IS WHY POISONOUS PESTICIDES DO NOT SOLVE THE REAL PROBLEMS FACING THE DYSFUNCTIONAL FOOD SYSTEM EXTANT IN THE WORLD TODAY. ***Plants under stress literally signal insects to come devour them.***

(Source: June 2013, June 2013, "Why Bees are Disappearing", by Marla Spivak on www.ted.com; May/June 2013, MOTHER EARTH LIVING, "Love bugs" by Ellen Ecker Ogden; TUNING IN TO NATURE, by Philip S. Callahan, Ph.D, available for \$20 through www.acresusa.com; June 1998, SUNSET MAGAZINE, "Pest and Weed Control")

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Food and Medicine

When native plants are displaced by invasive non-native plants that naturalize and start growing in the wild, then lives that relied on the original plants are lost. Be sure to have enough native plants for some of your best allies to make homes, eat, reproduce, and overwinter for multiple seasons. It helps to add borders consisting of a variety of native perennial flowers, grasses, and shrubs. *That's BEST practices.*

Native plants co-existed with animals, fungi, and microbes to form the foundation of native ecosystems. They provide sources of food and nesting habitat for animals, bees, birds, butterflies, and other pollinating insects. Native plants require less fertilizer, less watering, and less overall care. Many native plants grow quickly and birds and native pollinators are attracted to the berries and pretty blossoms.

NORTH AMERICA's earliest explorers collected specimens of native plants for botanists to classify. They kept journal notes about the plants and landscapes they met. Their journals have notations on plants used for FOOD AND MEDICINE. *The Native people had a long history of using plants for basket weaving, ceremonies, food, and medicine.*

The CALIFORNIA Poppy is an example of an edible native plant food, and so are Acorns, Pecans, and Pinenut seeds. Native Oaks and Pine forests SUSTAINED the Indians with Acorn flour, and nutritious seeds before clearcutting and logging. People can, you know, build houses out of adobe mud. Just suppose you changed your mind about what's truly sustainable.

Plants that are considered native were present here before the arrival of EURO settlers, who brought European grasses and other seeds, inadvertently or intentionally.

(Sources: August/September ECONeWS, "What's So Important About Native Plants?" by the California Native Plant Society at www.cnps.org ; www.yournec.org ; May/June 2013, MOTHER EARTH LIVING, "Love bugs" by Ellen Ecker Ogden)

Horticulture

Pheromones play a role in certain insects being attracted only to certain plants. Some plants like living together happily ever after. Roses prefer Sweet Alyssum who entices wasps to come eat aphids. In like manner, Tomatoes and Vegetables like partnering up with either Marigold or Nasturtium who are also good at keeping aphids away.

Since your insect friends need nectar throughout the growing season, you might want to provide a space now for Sweet Alyssum, child of Mustard. Make room for Buckwheat. Add Carrot's Family of Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, and Parsley. Sow Daisy's Family of Aster, Cosmos, and Yarrow. Invite in The Mints. Soon you will have a nice community.

WWOOF-USA

There is a worldwide effort to link volunteers with organic farmers, and to promote an educational exchange, in order to build an international community of conscious eco-farming practices. WWOOF-USA facilitates volunteering on organic farms. The program is available to anyone over 18-years of age—families, farmers, gardeners, people who have never touched soil ever in your life, professionals, and urbanites. All are welcome. You would generally participate in farm work and projects for a half-day. *In exchange, you would be provided with accommodation AND meals.*

For more information see www.woofusa.org . The organization produces a quarterly directory of more than 500 organic U.S. farmers who would like to host volunteers on their organic farms. (Source: ACRES USA, "Eco-Agriculture" special edition, Eco-net online resources)

Veganic Gardening Internships

There is so much more you could do. You may not know if you would like to live the dream. Veganic gardening internship programs are a way to gain experience and knowledge. Internship is available at a 600-acre *Animal Place* sanctuary, about an hour northeast of *Sacramento*, in *Grass Valley*, CALIFORNIA. To know the sacred soil on which you stand, resident veganic gardening internships are available throughout the year.

Interns are expected to commit to a vegan lifestyle during their veganic gardening internship. An internship is for four or eight weeks, starting on the first of each month. Interns must fulfill 40-hours of veganic gardening horticultural work each week. Housing is available at no charge. Weekly trips to a grocery store are provided since food is NOT provided. Pick-up from the *Sacramento* Airport or local train station is possible if you do not have a vehicle. You might want to start the application process now. Fill out the horticulture application at www.animalplace.org/student.html or call the Manager, *Jamie London*, at 530.798.5116. (Source: Spring 2012 ANIMAL PLACE MAGAZINE, "Intern now!" ANIMAL PLACE, P.O. Box 118, Grass Valley, CA 95945)

Random Acts of Kindness

When you keep insects and spiders outdoors where they belong in plants and trees, the hungry birds will appreciate the extra snacks. Your yard should be a teeming insect community with plants that attract beneficial bugs to feed on the pesky ones for balanced ecology. Spiders are valuable because of their appetite. But to keep spiders out of your car, grate an *Ivory* bar and sprinkle the soap flakes under the seats of your vehicles. After about a month, use a car vacuum attachment to remove the old flakes and replace with fresh.

A little yard care is easy on the planet. Keep your woodpile at least eight inches off the ground and away from your house so that earwigs, termites, and their ilk seek other habitat. Pick up fruit rotting on the ground, and do NOT let old fruit accumulate in trees. Repair leaky roofs. Water-damaged wood attracts carpenter ants. Downspouts should be directed so as to drain well away from the house. Replace white outdoor lights with yellow bulbs. Clean up dog droppings. To keep ants out, plant *Mint* or *Tansy* along the outside of your home.

It helps to put weather-stripping on doors, to caulk around conduits, pipes, vents, windows and whatever penetrates your walls. You can stuff steel wool into bigger cracks or gaps. For a quick fix you can put caulk or duct tape over a crack until more permanent measures can be taken.

You can eliminate the obvious temptations that attract bugs to come indoors. Repair leaky faucets. Keep counters clean, the kitchen trash can covered, and place pet food bowls inside a larger water-filled dish for a "Moat Effect" that renders the food inaccessible to bugs. Also do NOT leave dirty dishes in the sink, and thoroughly rinse any food residue from bottles and cans before recycling. Insects love grease, so keep your oven and stove clean, as well as barbeque grills.

Cockroaches come into homes in boxes, shopping bags, and second-hand furniture. To prevent these stowaways, keep your home in order.

To discourage bugs from seeking refuge in rugs, clean them regularly. People can, you know, eliminate carpeting.

Brush and clean your clothes regularly to ward off *Moths*, which feed on human secretions, and hang nibble-prone attire in garment bags. To kill moth larvae, throw clothes in the dryer or freezer. For a natural moth-repellent, mix together eight ounces *Mint*, eight ounces *Rosemary*, four ounces *Thyme*, 4 ounces *Ginseng*, and two tablespoons *Cloves*. Fill cheesecloth bags and place among at-risk clothing.

(Source: March/April 1999, SIERRA, *Hearth and Home "Bugs Begone"*, by *Kim Rice*; WHY YOUR HOUSE MAY ENDANGER YOUR HEALTH, by *Alfred Zamm* and *Robert Gannon*)

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The Non-Toxic Approach

"USDA Certified Organic" standards were implemented in 2002. MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY's Dr. Phil Howard created the organic sector chart of NORTH AMERICA's top 25 major organic food suppliers. The most recent update is available at <http://cornucopia.org/index.php/who-owns-organic>. In CANADA, British Columbia has more organic farmers than any other province.

(Source: 2006, ACRES USA, Special Edition, "The Voice of Eco-Agriculture")

Chemical Warfare is NOT the Solution

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

—Isaiah 2:4, THE HOLY BIBLE

The *David Suzuki Foundation* in CANADA claims at least 3,000 Canadian children are ACUTELY POISONED BY PESTICIDES each year, and called for a NATIONAL BAN on all lawn and garden pesticides.

In *Winnipeg, Manitoba*, the city is home to more mosquitoes than any other in NORTH AMERICA. They call mosquitoes the "*Manitoban Air Force*". Instead of waging war with their insects by bombing them with pesticides and fogging them from a fleet of trucks, Winnipeggers want change. Waging war against Nature is a battle Man can't win.

Naturalist *Paula Grief* at the OAK HAMMOCK MARSH INTERPRETIVE CENTER outside Winnipeg asserts that Mosquitoes are part of being *Manitoban* because they are important pollinators, needing to be embraced for their work in the prairie province's agricultural community. Their natural predator is the DRAGONFLY. City officials are experimenting with attracting DRAGONFLIES to keep the mosquito count down enough.

Winnipegger residents are sick of chemical compounds and poisonous spraying. They are raising concerns about the environmental impact of the organophosphate insecticide, called MALATHION, which is commonly used in the U.S.

Several organic product stores in Winnipeg now sell NEEM OIL sprays. NEEM OIL is made from the seeds of an evergreen tree indigenous to INDIA. Organic NEEM SOAP can be found at www.MotherEarthNews.com/Shopping by clicking on "Garden Store".

During humid summers, PYROCIDE is another alternative. It is made from chrysanthemum flowers. Winnipeggers are also switching over to Lemons, Garlic, or Peppermint extracts with a Witch Hazel base as a home remedy. People can, you know, reframe the way they think.

(Source: September 13, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "What's the Buzz in Winnipeg?" by David George-Cosh)

Pop Quiz

Can you point to the four compass directions right now: Where is EAST, SOUTH, WEST, and NORTH.

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